UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/48/574
8 November 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-eighth session
Agenda item 106

# TRAINING AND RESEARCH: UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH

## Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 47/227 of 8 April 1993 concerning the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). In that resolution, the General Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session on the arrangements mentioned in the resolution.

2. In accordance with paragraph 1 of resolution 47/227, the UNITAR building has been transferred to the United Nations in return for the cancellation of the debt of the Institute and coverage of its financial obligations for 1992. The building has 22,500 square feet of office space, including five floors of 4,000 square feet each, and a basement of 2,500 square feet. Office and meeting facilities for non-governmental organizations occupy the first floor and a portion of the basement. The other floors have been assigned to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, 60 staff members of which are thus accommodated.

3. In exchange for the transfer of the building of the United Nations, the General Assembly determined that the debt of the Institute to the United Nations should be cancelled and its obligation for 1992 covered. At 31 December 1992, the amount involved, that is, the value at which the building was taken up in the accounts of the United Nations, was $10,678,482.

4. The decision to transfer UNITAR to Geneva was taken following the adoption on 8 April 1993 of General Assembly resolution 47/227. The Assembly, recognizing that there would be costs involved in New York subsequent to 31 December 1992, had adopted section XXIV of resolution 47/219 on 23 December 1992, which the Secretary-General was authorized to commit funds by advances from the Working Capital Fund, not to exceed $400,000, to cover certain costs of the UNITAR New York office in 1993. On the recommendation of the Fifth Committee (see A/47/914), the General Assembly in passing resolution 47/227 decided to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into a commitment of an additional $200,000 to cover the requirements of UNITAR until June 1993.

5. The headquarters of UNITAR has been transferred to Geneva, effective 1 July 1993. The Institute operates from the location already available to its Geneva-based operations in the United Nations-rented building of Petit Saconnex. Total staff now include 14 Professionals (of whom 12 are charged against special-purpose grants); 9 General Service (of whom 6 are also charged against special-purpose grants); 2 consultants; 7 special fellows in residence; and 4 interns, remunerated through university exchange programmes. The Board of Trustees of the Institute, whose new members have been appointed by the Secretary-General, is expected to meet at Geneva before the end of 1993.

6. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 47/227, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to designate a liaison officer to organize and coordinate the existing training programmes and research activities relating to training in New York, within existing resources. The Secretary-General designated the Chief of the Training Service, Office of Human Resources Management, Department of Administration and Management, as the focal point to ensure a smooth transition for the organizational arrangements of UNITAR and to coordinate the remaining New York-based training programmes, as indicated below.

7. Taking into account the debate held in the Second Committee at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General shares the widely expressed view that the training programmes in multilateral diplomacy undertaken by UNITAR in New York have served a useful purpose for a large number of Member States. In that regard, the Secretary-General had already confirmed to the Second Committee in 1992 that those training programmes could be organized and coordinated by the relevant departments of the United Nations Secretariat (see A/C.2/47/L.94, para. 11).

8. Accordingly, arrangements have been made to continue those programmes in New York under the auspices of the United Nations. In August 1993, a letter was sent to the heads of all permanent missions inviting them to nominate members of their delegations to attend one or more of the briefings for new delegates to the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. The programme, which was held from 20 to 24 September, consisted of the following three briefings:

(a) Special briefing on peace-keeping issues, attended by 104 delegates from 50 countries;

(b) General briefing on the work of the forty-eighth session of the Assembly, attended by 186 delegates from 73 countries;

(c) Special briefing on the work of the Fifth Committee of the Assembly, attended by 58 delegates from 42 countries.

9. The Department of Public Information provided the institutional umbrella for the orientation briefings, while the Training Service of the Office of Human Resources Management provided technical and administrative services. Marginal costs related to the programmes were absorbed by the United Nations departments involved. The senior fellow previously in charge of the training programme for permanent missions continued to conduct the briefings. There are no costs relating to the contribution of senior fellows.

10. Replies by the participants to the evaluation questionnaires indicate that the programmes were well received and found useful. The replies also denote a need for expanding the training programmes for mission staff in New York on critical issues relating to the activities of the United Nations, especially in the field of peace-keeping. It is the intention of the Secretary-General to continue the training programme in multilateral diplomacy for permanent missions in New York, and to expand it subject to the availability of voluntary contributions for that purpose.

11. Several training programmes were held at the specific request of Member States or members of other organs of the United Nations system, as referred to in paragraph 5 of resolution 47/227. In compliance with Economic and Social Council resolutions 1991/70 and 1992/67, and with reiterated requests from the Geneva Diplomatic Committee, UNITAR prepared and organized a training programme on computer literacy and access to United Nations information systems, at Geneva, for diplomats and staff members of the United Nations system. The participants had to bear their own costs, but UNITAR established a scholarship fund for diplomats from developing countries. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) made its training laboratories available. In addition, the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat entrusted UNITAR with the design and organization of the Fellowship Programme in International Law at The Hague. Following a similar format, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) requested UNITAR to organize jointly a Fellowship Programme on Environmental Law and Policy, due to be held in December 1993 at Nairobi. Further to the proposal made during the debate at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly and with the assistance of various States and private foundations, UNITAR designed and conducted a Fellowship Programme in Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy. In response to numerous requests, UNITAR has prepared, in collaboration with the interim secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a rather comprehensive information and training programme to promote the implementation of the Convention. Over the last 15 months the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has requested UNITAR to design and organize various training programmes, in particular in the management of foreign affairs, for newly independent countries and countries in transition. UNITAR has also organized programmes at the specific request of non-governmental institutions, including the International Academy for Environment, Geneva, the International Institute for Public Administration, Paris, and the Foundation for Advanced Studies in International Development, Tokyo.

12. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 47/227, the General Assembly decided that, as at 1 January 1993, the funding of all the administrative budget and the training programme of the Institute should be covered from voluntary contributions, donations, special-purpose grants and executing agency overheads. In the nine months ended 30 September 1993, UNITAR had received government contributions totalling $262,800. Miscellaneous income amounted to $166,400, resulting in total available resources of $429,200. Expenditures against that total amounted to $417,200 as at the end of September. UNITAR projects that an additional $130,000 will be received before the end of 1993, which will be sufficient to cover estimated costs until 31 December 1993. Thus, the financial situation remains very tight and fragile. Unless UNITAR is able to mobilize significant government contributions and other income in the biennium 1994-1995, there is serious danger of further financial difficulty.

13. In accordance with paragraphs 6 and 8 of resolution 47/227, UNITAR has developed its contacts with multilateral and regional governmental organizations, bilateral cooperation agencies, foundations, institutes and universities in both developing and developed countries. As a matter of principle, the new policy is to offer the services of UNITAR in the field of training to the lead bodies of the organization and lead agencies of the United Nations system. The same applied to regional organizations, be they intergovernmental (the European Community (EEC), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Regional Training Centre for Agrometeorology and Operational Hydrology and their Applications (AGRHYMET) and the Agence de coopération culturelle et technique (ACCT)) or private (International Group of National Associations of Manufacturers of Agrochemical Products, or the International Council of Chemical Associations and the International Organization of Civil Protection). Training institutes, foundations and development cooperation agencies in developing and industrialized countries enjoy close working relations with UNITAR in the field of environmental management, management of foreign affairs and disaster preparedness. Obviously, the content of the training programmes is decided in cooperation with substantive units of development cooperation agencies from the donor and recipient countries. Efforts are being made to coordinate programme activities between UNITAR and the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ILO), at Turin, Italy.

14. In this context, the Secretary-General is deeply concerned with the need to enhance the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to the increasing training requirements at both the international and national levels, and fully agrees with the emphasis placed in paragraph 7 of the resolution on the strengthening of cooperation with existing institutions, particularly the International Training Centre of ILO. The development of an effective world-wide training capacity for staff, for nationals of Member States closely involved in United Nations-related work and for diplomatic missions is a prerequisite for enhancing the effectiveness of the activities of the United Nations in the fields of development, peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance. Existing mechanisms, such as the Training Subcommittee of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions and the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions, are now establishing inter-agency linkages to coordinate training activities in a more effective manner. The Field Coordination Management Programme implemented under the aegis of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions is particularly relevant in that context. The coordination workshops for senior United Nations system field representatives, organized under the guidance of that Committee by the International Training Centre of ILO are a successful example of how training can be utilized as part of a comprehensive strategy aimed at improving the coherence and effectiveness of United Nations system operations at the field level. Systematic work was also initiated in July 1993 by a joint United Nations/ILO task force appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of ILO to explore the better use of the International Training Centre at Turin for the benefit of the training programmes of the two organizations.

15. In reaffirming that UNITAR should focus on providing training programmes and research activities relating to training, in paragraph 7 of its resolution 47/227 the General Assembly emphasized the importance of enhancing the research

capacity of the system as a whole. In accordance with that resolution and with paragraph 2 (a) of General Assembly resolution 46/180 of 19 December 1991, UNITAR no longer performs functions of research and study. That development has been taken into account in the formulation of the proposals for the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the Organization, which were acted on by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/212 B of 6 May 1993. It is also being borne in mind in pursuing action at the inter-agency level to ensure that the research capacity of the system is strengthened and that the system is intellectually equipped to respond effectively to the challenges ahead, in a rapidly changing world situation. Thus, for example, the reinforcement of the capacity of the Organization in the field of economic and social information and policy analysis was one of the underlying objectives of the new structures established at Headquarters. Enhancing the impact of research and analysis activities and mutual feedback between them and operational activities was also a major concern in the restructuring and consolidation of the subsidiary machinery of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The Secretary-General intends to keep the matter under constant review.

16. Paragraph 7 of resolution 47/227 refers specifically to the role of the United Nations University (UNU). During his visit to UNU headquarters in February 1993, the Secretary-General stressed that:

> "The University must become a reservoir of ideas, a source of information and understanding available to the United Nations in its entirety. It is imperative that existing linkages be strengthened and, more importantly, utilized."

17. It is in that spirit that UNU is reorganizing its programme priorities. In its programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, greater emphasis is being placed on strengthening the academic contributions of the University to policy questions that now need to be addressed by the United Nations, with particular attention to matters pertaining to the "Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277-S/24111) and Agenda 21. The purpose of those new activities is to generate policy-oriented research findings that would be of relevance to the United Nations in enhancing the effectiveness of its action. Plans are also under way for an intensification of the research activities of UNU, directly benefiting entities of the United Nations system or directly related to their activities.

18. As can be inferred from the above, the main provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/227 have been implemented. However, with regard to the provision contained in paragraph 3 of that resolution that the funding of all the administrative budget and the training programmes of the Institute should be covered from voluntary contributions, donations, special-purpose grants and executing agency overheads, the financial situation of the Institute remains fragile, as indicated in paragraph 12 above. The response by the international community to the invitation by the General Assembly to make voluntary contributions to the restructured Institute, in particular to its General Fund, so as to assure its viability will, in this regard, be a determining factor for the future implementation of resolution 47/227.

---